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ABSTRACT

Black people constitute the second largest racial group in the United States. The population grew by 17 percent between 1970 and 1980. This booklet provides the following types of information about black Americans: (1) population trends; (2) residence patterns; (3) economic status; (4) employment status; (5) home ownership; (6) voting potential; (7) education; (8) military service; (9) life expectancy; and (10) family composition. The statistical information is presented in 20 charts and graphs. Thirty-four photographs are included. (VM)

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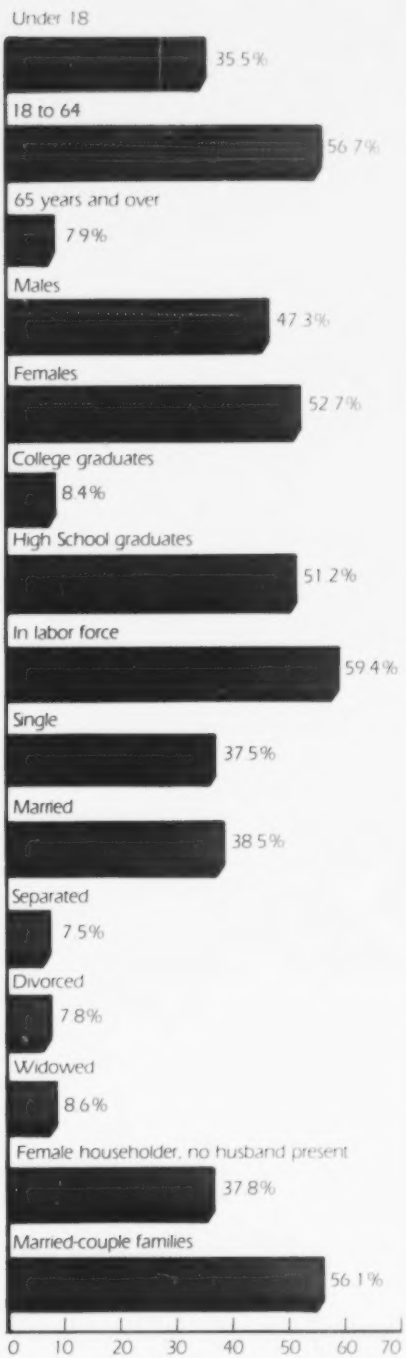
We, The Black Americans

Who are we . . .

We are the Black people of the United States, the nation's second largest racial group. The 1980 census counted 26.5 million of us, an increase of nearly 4 million from the 1970 census. Our population grew by 17 percent between 1970 and 1980, bringing our proportion of the U.S. population to nearly 12 percent:

- We are largely an urban people; most of us live in cities and in large metropolitan areas . . .
- We are going to school in greater numbers than ever before
- We are holding better jobs . . .
- Our voting age population has increased to 16 million . . .
- We are living longer . . .
- And more of us are becoming homeowners . . .

Percent of Black Population: 1980



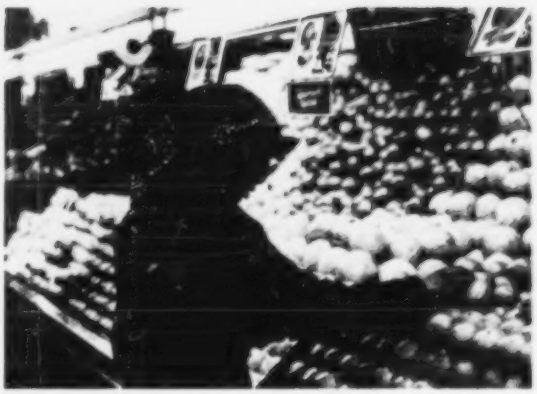
There are more of us . . .

In 1790, when the first census was taken, we numbered about 760,000 and represented about 19 percent of the U.S. population. By the start of the Civil War in 1860, our numbers had increased to 4.4 million but our percentage of the U.S. total dropped to 14.1 percent. Most of us were slaves, only 488,000 were counted as "freemen."

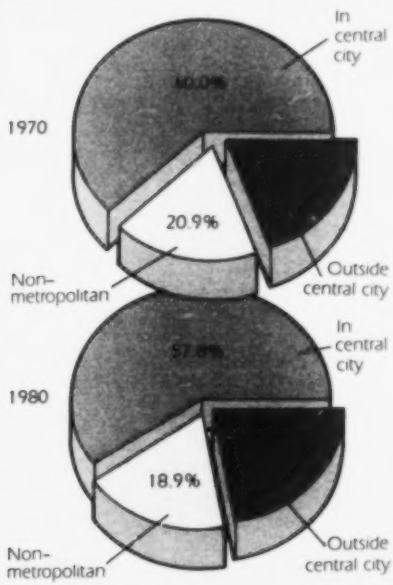
By 1900, our population had doubled over the 1860 figure, reaching 8.8 million. We passed the 15 million mark in 1950, and the census counted 22.6 million of us in 1970. By 1985, we numbered 28.2 million.

The Black Population at a Glance: 1980

Category	Number (In Millions)	Percent Black Population of Total Population
Under 18 years	9.4	14.7
18 years and over	17.1	10.5
65 years and over	2.1	8.2
Males	12.5	11.4
Females	14.0	12.0
College graduates (25 years and over)	1.1	5.1
High School graduates (25 years and over)	6.8	7.6
In labor force (16 years and over)	10.9	10.2
Single (15 years and over)	7.1	15.3
Married	7.3	7.3
Separated	1.4	34.9
Divorced	1.5	13.3
Widowed	1.6	12.1
Female householder, no husband present	2.3	27.2
Married-couple families	3.4	7.0



Distribution of Black Population by Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Residence: 1970 and 1980



Total and Black Populations: 1900-1980

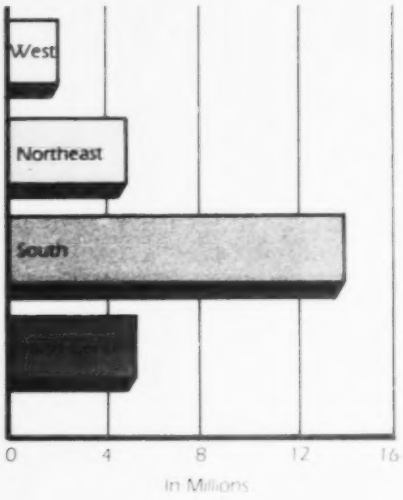
(Numbers in millions)

Year	Total	Black	Percent Black
1900	76.2	8.8	12
1910	92.2	9.8	11
1920	106.0	10.5	10
1930	123.2	11.9	10
1940	132.2	12.9	10
1950	151.3	15.0	10
1960	179.3	18.9	11
1970	203.2	22.6	11
1980	226.5	26.5	12

Where we live . . .

Though we live in all regions of the country, our roots are distinctly Southern. In 1910, about 90 percent of our population lived in the South. But fueled by a desire for better job opportunities and living conditions, we began leaving the South in large numbers. In the 1940 decade alone, about 1.6 million more of us left the South than moved there. However, during the last half of the 1970s, spurred by improved opportunities in the region, more of us moved back to the South than moved out. Today, just over half of all Blacks live in the South.

Distribution of the Black Population: 1980



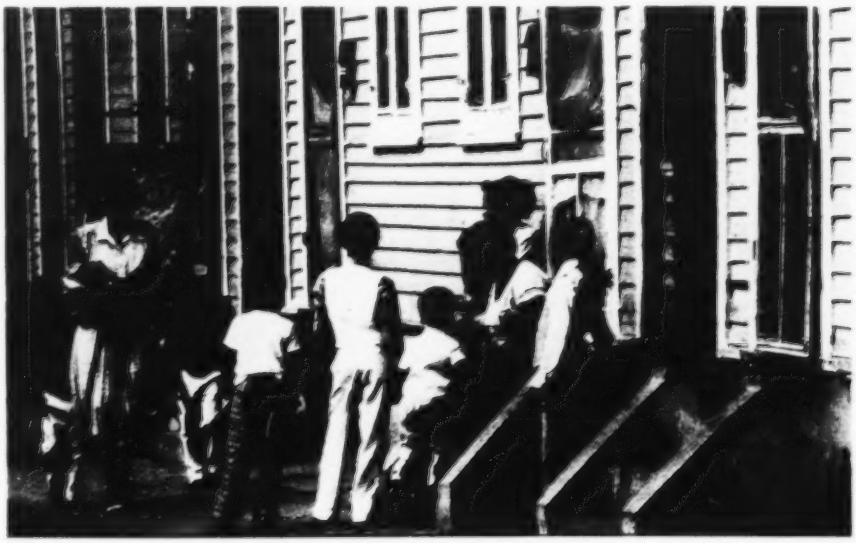
Our movement from the rural South to the industrial North was one of this country's greatest migrations. It brought enormous changes in our lifestyles; in a 40 year span (1910 to 1950) our migration patterns transformed our population from a majority rural to a majority urban people. Also fewer of us live on farms. In 1920, nearly one-half of us, or about 5 million, lived on farms. Today, our Black farm population numbers fewer than 200,000, less than 1 percent of our total.

. . . Into the cities

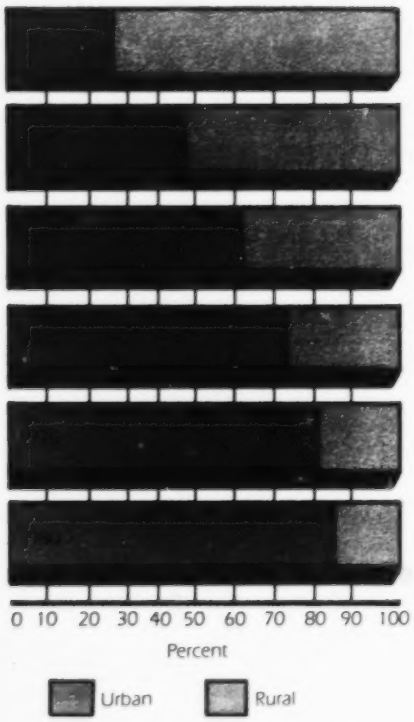
About 60 percent of us lived in central cities of metropolitan areas in 1980. We moved to these places in search of better job opportunities. Some of us were able to improve our lifestyles. Many of us prospered and sent back "down home" for relatives and friends.

In 1980, of the 100 cities with the largest Black population, 17 cities had Black populations of 50 percent or more. We make up about 70 percent of the total population of Washington, D.C., the nation's capital. But the city with the highest proportion of Blacks is East St. Louis, Illinois; almost 96 percent of its residents are Black.

Twenty-eight cities had Black populations that exceeded 100,000. New York had the largest Black population (1,784,337). Second largest was Chicago (1,197,000), followed by Detroit (758,939), Philadelphia (638,878), and Los Angeles (505,210).



Urban and Rural Population: 1910-1980



50 Cities With the Largest Black Population: 1980

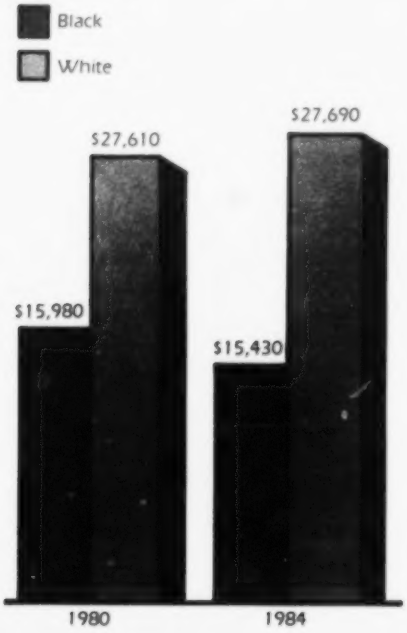
Rank	City	Black population		Total population
		Number	Percent of total	
	United States	26,495,025	11.7	226,545,805
1	New York, NY	1,784,337	25.2	7,071,639
2	Chicago, IL	1,197,000	39.8	3,005,072
3	Detroit, MI	758,939	63.1	1,203,339
4	Philadelphia, PA	638,878	37.8	1,688,210
5	Los Angeles, CA	505,210	17.0	2,966,850
6	Washington, DC	448,906	70.3	638,333
7	Houston, TX	440,346	27.6	1,595,138
8	Baltimore, MD	431,151	54.8	786,775
9	New Orleans, LA	308,149	55.3	557,515
10	Memphis, TN	307,702	47.6	646,356
11	Atlanta, GA	282,911	66.6	425,022
12	Dallas, TX	265,594	29.4	904,078
13	Cleveland, OH	251,347	43.8	573,822
14	St. Louis, MO	206,386	45.6	453,085
15	Newark, NJ	191,745	58.2	329,248
16	Oakland, CA	159,281	46.9	339,337
17	Birmingham, AL	158,224	55.6	284,413
18	Indianapolis, IN	152,626	21.8	700,807
19	Milwaukee, WI	146,940	23.1	636,212
20	Jacksonville, FL	137,324	25.4	540,920
21	Cincinnati, OH	130,467	33.8	385,457
22	Boston, MA	126,229	22.4	562,994
23	Columbus, OH	124,880	22.1	564,871
24	Kansas City, MO	122,699	27.4	448,159
25	Richmond, VA	112,357	51.3	219,214
26	Gary, IN	107,644	70.8	151,953
27	Nashville-Davidson, TN	105,942	23.3	455,651
28	Pittsburgh, PA	101,813	24.0	423,938
29	Charlotte, NC	97,627	31.0	314,447
30	Jackson, MS	95,357	47.0	202,895
31	Buffalo, NY	95,116	26.6	357,870
32	Norfolk, VA	93,987	35.2	266,979
33	Fort Worth, TX	87,723	22.8	385,164
34	Miami, FL	87,110	25.1	346,865
35	San Francisco, CA	86,414	12.7	678,974
36	Shreveport, LA	84,627	41.1	205,820
37	Louisville, KY	84,080	28.2	298,451
38	Baton Rouge, LA	80,088	36.5	219,419
39	San Diego, CA	77,700	8.9	875,538
40	Dayton, OH	75,016	36.9	203,371
41	Mobile, AL	72,568	36.2	200,452
42	Montgomery, AL	69,660	39.2	177,857
43	Savannah, GA	69,241	49.0	141,390
44	Flint, MI	66,124	41.4	159,611
45	East Orange, NJ	64,626	83.2	77,690
46	Tampa, FL	63,835	23.5	271,523
47	Rochester, NY	62,332	25.8	241,741
48	Jersey City, NJ	61,954	27.7	223,532
49	Toledo, OH	61,750	17.4	354,635
50	Compton, CA	60,812	74.8	81,286

States with One Million or More Black Population: 1980

State	Population
New York	2,402,006
California	1,819,281
Texas	1,710,175
Illinois	1,675,398
Georgia	1,465,181
Florida	1,342,688
North Carolina	1,318,857
Louisiana	1,238,241
Michigan	1,199,023
Ohio	1,076,748
Pennsylvania	1,046,810
Virginia	1,008,668

Median Family Money Income by Race of Householder: 1980 and 1984

(1984 Dollars)



. . . And we are spreading out

Recently, more of us began moving from the city to the suburbs. Our population residing in suburbs grew by 43 percent between 1970 and 1980. Still, we make up only 6 percent of the nation's suburban population.

Our state totals are growing, too . . .

We live in every state, ranging from about 1,000 in Vermont to 2.4 million in New York. Overall, 12 states had a Black population of one million or more in 1980, an increase of three states (Michigan, Ohio, and Virginia) over 1970.

How much money do we make? . . .

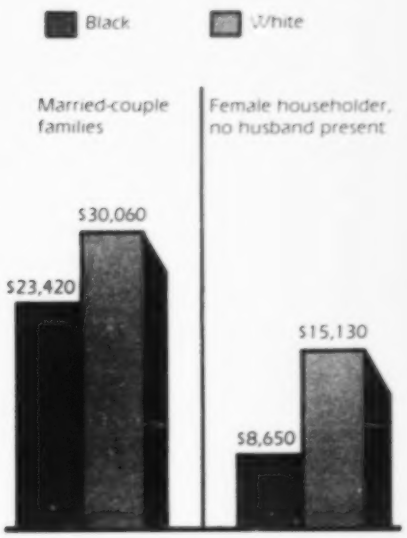
In 1984, our median family money income was $15,430. In other words, half of our families received more and half received less than $15,430. Twenty-nine percent of our families had incomes of $25,000 or more in 1984, whereas more than half of White families were in this income category. Our median income was highest for those of us who lived in the West ($19,210) and lowest for those of us residing in the South ($14,860) and Midwest ($14,370).

After adjusting for inflation, the median income of Black families in 1984 was not significantly different from 1980—$15,430 versus $15,980.

Black family median income was 56 percent of White family income in 1984. Stated another way, for every $100 a White family received, a Black family received $56.

One reason that our median incomes for families has not improved is partly because of the high proportion of our families with a female householder with no husband present, and the low incomes received by these families.

Median Family Money Income by Type of Family and Race of Householder: 1984



In 1985, 44 percent of Black families were maintained by women alone compared with only 13 percent of White families. The 1984 median income for Black families maintained by women was only $8,650, 37 percent of the median of Black married-couple families ($23,420). In White husband-wife families, the median income was $30,060 and $15,130 for families maintained by women with no husband present.

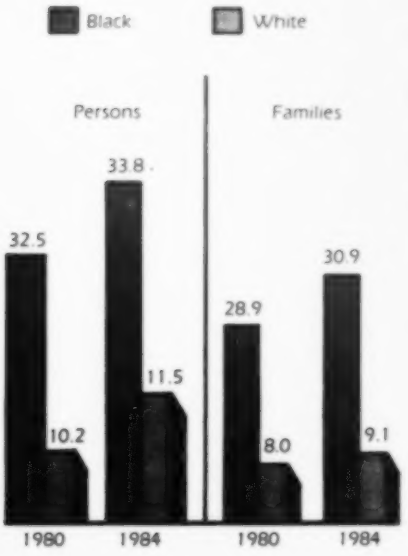
. . . And more poverty

We made significant progress in several areas during the past decade, but inflation and a periodically recessionary economy caused many of us to slip below the poverty level.

- The number of Black persons below the poverty line rose from 8.6 million in 1980 to 9.5 million in 1984. Among Whites, 23.0 million were poor in 1984.
- The Black poverty rate was 33.8 percent in 1984, not significantly different from the 1980 rate of 32.5 percent. The poverty rate for Whites was 11.5 percent in 1984.
- About 31 percent or 2.1 million of all Black families had money incomes below the poverty level in 1984.
- Black female householders accounted for 73 percent of all poor Black families in 1984.

The federally defined poverty level, does not include noncash benefits such as housing, food and medical assistance.

Percent of Persons and Families Below the Poverty Level By Race: 1980 and 1984



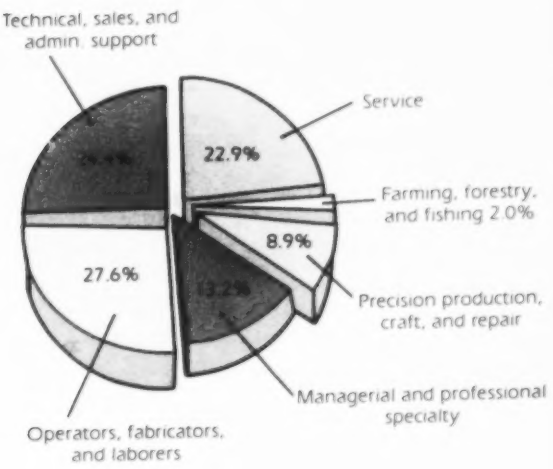
Looking for a job . . . difficult times for some . . .

Unemployment remains one of our most serious problems. Our numbers employed grew by about 2 million during the past decade (1974-1984), but at the same time many of us were looking for jobs.

In 1974, our unemployment rate was about twice the rate of Whites (10.5 percent versus 5.0 percent). Ten years later (1984), our unemployment rate was more than two times that of Whites—15.9 percent compared with 6.5 percent.

Finding a job has been especially difficult for our teenagers. For example, in 1974, one-third of our teens were looking for work. A depressed job market for Black teens pushed this figure to more than 40 percent in 1984.

Occupational Distribution of the Black Population: 1980

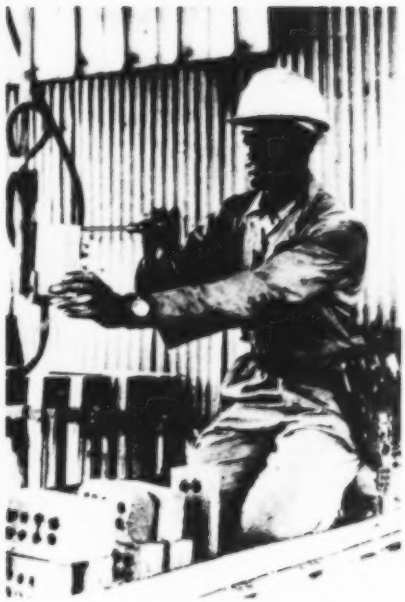


Where we work . . .

In 1980, there were 9.3 million of us employed. Though many of us have moved into better paying jobs, our representation in the professions, and some high-skilled jobs is still small. For instance, we comprised only 7 percent of all professionals and 8 percent of all technicians and related support workers in 1980.

We are still heavily concentrated in certain jobs. For example, Blacks accounted for more than half (54 percent) of private household cleaners and servants and about one-fourth of all postal clerks, and of all nursing aids, orderlies, and attendants.

There has been improvement in many areas. For example, the number of Black airplane pilots and navigators jumped from 77 in 1970 to 678 in 1980. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of Black judges rose from 297 to 1,683. Also noteworthy is the increase in the ranks of Black lawyers; their numbers moved from 3,406 to 13,594 during the 1970s. In 1980, Black women comprised almost one-third of all Black lawyers in the country.



Selected Occupational Groups, by Race: 1980

Occupation	Black	White	Percent Black of total
Professional Specialty	867,345	10,937,561	7.1
Exec., Admin. & Managers	510,776	9,547,471	4.9
Technicians and Related Support	258,213	2,656,648	8.4
Administrative Support, including Clerical	1,762,420	15,113,627	10.0
Sales	533,475	9,410,609	5.2
Service	2,395,273	10,446,792	17.6
Private Household	256,132	333,244	40.9

Selected Occupations by Race and Sex: 1980

	Black		White	
Occupation	Male	Female	Male	Female
Lawyers	9,322	4,272	417,815	63,165
Judges	1,162	521	21,551	4,147
Dentists	2,715	480	110,425	7,171
Physicians	10,264	3,245	330,297	42,316
Registered Nurses	5,489	91,534	44,278	1,086,595
Chemistry Teachers	148	58	6,126	1,559
Airplane Pilots and Navigators	652	26	73,572	986
Hairdressers and Cosmetologists	4,445	33,623	60,340	437,933
Computer Operators	18,681	28,041	133,986	195,336
Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters Apprentices	32,746	983	446,313	5,313

We're in business, too . . .

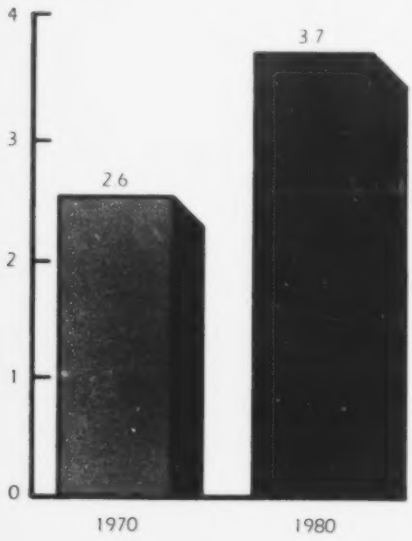
The last survey of minority-owned businesses conducted in 1982 showed that we owned and operated 339,239 firms with gross sales and receipts of $12.4 billion. Most were concentrated in the retail and service trades. California had the largest number of Black-owned firms; Texas was second.

A glance at some businesses we own and operate . . .

Industry group	Firms (number)	Receipts (million dollars)
Automotive dealers and service stations	3,448	1,307
Miscellaneous retail	53,981	993
Food stores	9,187	883
Eating and drinking places	11,629	675
Health services	17,195	595

In 1982, 95 percent of our businesses were operated as sole proprietorships and 11 percent had paid employees. Nearly half (47 percent) of all Black firms had gross receipts of less than $5,000 annually.

Black Homeowners: 1970 and 1980



We're buying more homes . . .

More of us became homeowners during the 1970s. The number of homes we owned increased from 2.6 million in 1970 to 3.7 million in 1980.

By 1980, 44 percent of us lived in homes we either owned or were buying. That is up from 1970 when 42 percent of us owned our homes.

The median value of our homes in 1980 was $27,200 compared with $48,600 for White homeowners.

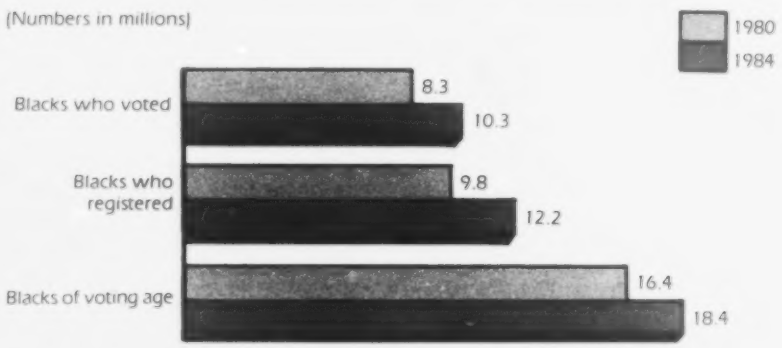
We have the vote potential . . . and we're using it . . .

We have begun to realize the importance and influence of the vote. In the November 1984 Presidential election, the Black voter registration rate of 66 percent matched previous highs recorded in 1968 and 1972, and the actual turnout rate of 56 percent was the highest since 1968 (58 percent). A total of 12.2 million Blacks reported being registered and 10.3 million said they voted in 1984 compared with 9.8 million and 8.3 million in 1980.

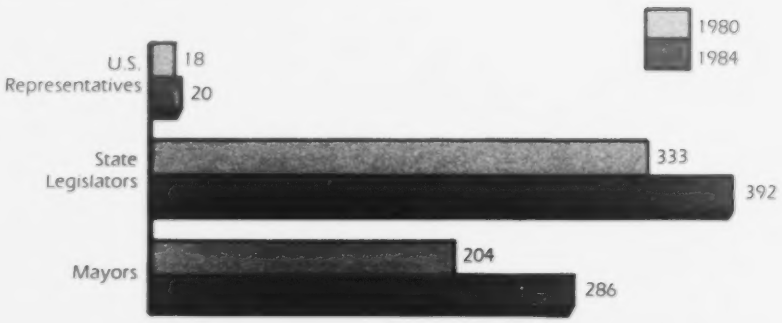
Young Blacks under 25 made the most dramatic gains in 1984, increasing 12 percentage points over 1980 in registration and 10 points in turnout, both highs since the voting age was lowered to 18 years. In 1980, the under 25 Black registration was 41.3 percent and turnout 30.1 percent.

We have elected big city mayors, state lawmakers, and increased our representation in Congress. Our increased political power has resulted in the election of more than 6,000 Blacks to elective offices nationwide.

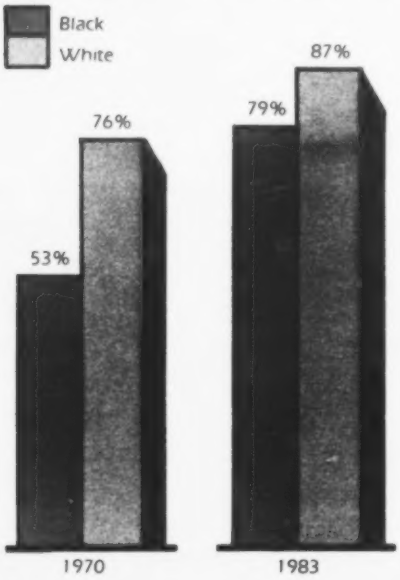
Black Voter Participation and Registration: 1980 and 1984



Black Elected Officials: 1980 and 1984



Percent High School Graduates for Persons 25 to 34 Years Old by Race: 1970 and 1983



We're better educated . . .

We continue to place a high value on education. Today, we are better educated and more of us are staying in school. For instance, the proportion of high school dropouts for Blacks 16 to 19 years old declined from 22 percent in 1970 to 12 percent in 1983.

There has also been improvement in our educational attainment. The proportion of Blacks 25 years and over completing high school rose from 34 percent in 1970 to 57 percent in 1983. For Blacks 25 to 34 years old, 79 percent had completed high school in 1983 compared with 53 percent in 1970. The comparable figures for Whites were 87 and 76 percent for those years.

And in college . . .

In 1983, 1.1 million of us were enrolled in college, double the number in 1970. We represented 10 percent of the college population between the ages of 18 and 34 in 1983 and Black women in college (605,000) outnumbered Black men (497,000).

. . . And into the military

More of us are choosing military service. The number of Blacks serving in the Armed Forces rose sharply during the past decade. About 415,000 Blacks were in the Armed Forces in 1982 compared with 257,000 in 1972. We increased our proportion from about 11 percent of the total in 1972 to almost 20 percent in 1982.

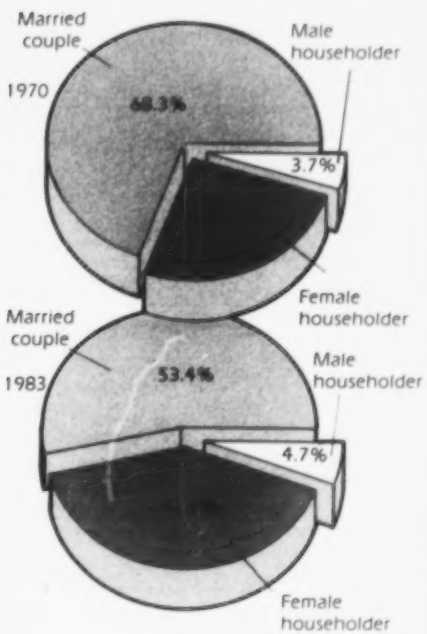
In 1981, about 90 percent of us who entered the military for the first time were high school graduates. And our proportion of Black officers rose from about 2 percent of the total in 1972 to almost 6 percent in 1982.

We're living longer . . .

Our life expectancy has improved significantly since 1970. The average life expectancy for a newborn Black baby in 1970 was 64 years compared with 72 years for a White baby. By 1982, our life expectancy averaged 69 years (65 years for men and 74 years for women), about 6 years less than Whites.

Deaths from cancer and heart disease are still unusually high among Blacks, accounting for about half of Black deaths in 1982.

Black Families by Type: 1970 and 1983



Changing family composition . . .

Our families are not as large as they used to be; more of us are living alone, and more of our marriages are being dissolved through divorce and separation. Even so, the number of Black families increased from 4.9 million in 1970 to 6.5 million in 1983.

There were other findings for 1983:

- Our separation and divorce rates were highest among all racial groups.
- About one-third of Black women who maintained families had never been married.
- More than half of Black children lived in one-parent homes.

Husband and wife: still the majority . . .

Even though profound changes have occurred in our families, more than half (53 percent) of Black families were still maintained by married couples in 1983. But the proportion has declined from the 1970 level of 68 percent. Increased separation and divorce were part of a national trend during the late 70s.

We're on the move . . .

The road ahead will be challenging. We've made progress over the past decade—in housing, occupational mobility, education, the number of elected officials, voter registration and turnout, and health care. But the setbacks related to economic conditions were serious. They are reflected in increased unemployment, the rise in one-parent families, and a growing poverty population.

But we are a resilient people, with resources yet to be developed and utilized. We are a talented, creative, dynamic, and positive people. And we are prepared to face challenges of the future with continued optimism and dedication.

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